

irradiating a condensed laser beam generated by a laser source to a certain point of an underwater workpiece; and

supplying gas to the certain point from a nozzle having a gas exit, the nozzle having an area surrounding the gas exit that extends to the surface of the workpiece for keeping the supplied gas between the nozzle and the workpiece, wherein the nozzle is formed as a disk having the gas exit at the center thereof.

19. (Once Amended) An underwater laser processing method, comprising:

irradiating a condensed laser beam generated by a laser source of an optical head to a certain point of an underwater workpiece;

supplying gas to the certain point from a nozzle of the optical head having a gas exit, the nozzle having an area surrounding the gas exit that extends to the surface of the workpiece for keeping the supplied gas between the nozzle and the workpiece; and

adjusting a gap between the nozzle and the workpiece using a gap adjuster positioned between the optical head and the workpiece.

Please add new claim 21 as follows.

21. (New) The method according to claim 19, wherein the gap adjuster includes a sliding member.